



AZ READS

Reading Specialist

Role

The Reading Specialist's role is to provide content expertise in reading instruction as needed to assist schools in meeting the goal of AZ READS – that children will read proficiently by the end of third grade. The Reading Specialist will support and assist teachers, schools and districts in the implementation of AZ READS, with a focus on enhancing the level of expertise of K-3 reading teachers through the application of evidence-based strategies in reading instruction. By positioning at least one Reading Specialist in each county, assistance will be locally accessible, equitable, and consistent across the state.

Responsibilities

The Reading Specialist will:

- ◆ Serve as a local representative of the Arizona Department of Education's Reading Initiative, AZ READS.
- ◆ Provide content expertise in scientifically based reading research and its implications for classroom instruction as needed.
- ◆ Participate in professional development sponsored by the Arizona Department of Education.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to the Reading First districts and schools in his/her region.
- ◆ Provide ongoing support and assistance to schools in the implementation of Reading First plans in his/her region.
- ◆ Provide ongoing support and assistance to schools in addressing reading achievement in School Improvement Plans in his/her region.

Scope of Work

The Reading Specialist will primarily be responsible for support and assistance to Reading First schools in his/her region, which includes but is not limited to: professional development, coaching, mentoring, advisement, technical assistance, and progress monitoring. The Reading Specialist will coordinate this work with the County School Superintendents, the Arizona Department of Education, and service providers contracted by the Department of Education. Although the Reading Specialist's primary responsibility is Reading First sub-grant schools, he/she will also be involved in the larger and broader based activities within the scope of AZ READS, specifically as it relates to the professional development of K-3 classroom teachers in reading.

Structural Plan

Reading Specialists will work for the Arizona Department of Education through an Inter-Government Agreement (IGA) between the school district by which the teacher is employed and the Arizona Department of Education. Each Reading Specialist will be housed at the County School Superintendent's Office through an IGA between the Office of County School Superintendents and the Arizona Department of Education. The IGA will be established with a three-year commitment.

Year One (2002-2003) Building Capacity

Reading Specialists are recruited and selected. IGAs are negotiated and approved. Specialists remain in their K-3 teaching assignments and work under an addendum contract. This first year they will receive training as trainers and technical assistants, during district approved release time, using their own classrooms and schools as laboratories to apply the skills they are learning. They will establish working relationships with staff at the Offices of County School Superintendents, the ADE, and contracted service providers. County Superintendents will develop a Regional Support Center that will initially establish the Reading Specialist and may include other support personnel (existing or additional) the County Superintendents deem necessary to provide support and assistance to schools in their county.

Year Two (2003-2004)

Reading Specialists are relieved of their classroom duties and will begin full-time, year round work housed at the County School Superintendent's Office in June of 2003 coinciding with the anticipated award of Reading First sub-grants to LEAs. This year, Reading Specialists will provide support and assistance described under "Responsibilities" and "Scope of Work".

Year Three (2003-2004)

Reading Specialists will continue the work of year two, and additionally participate in the training of a new cohort group of Reading Specialists who will be working on addendum contracts to repeat the cycle. At the conclusion of year three, Reading Specialists in cohort one will return to their districts with the possibility of continuing to serve as trainers and coaches as substitutes or in summer academies and institutes.

Qualifications

- ◆ Degree in elementary education and/or advanced degrees or endorsements in reading
- ◆ Three-five years experience in teaching reading at the primary level
- ◆ Demonstrated experience working with children having difficulty learning to read with evidence of improved reading achievement
- ◆ Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of scientifically based reading research
- ◆ Demonstrated experience with diverse learners
- ◆ Experience in professional development and/or working with adult learners
- ◆ Demonstrated experience and skill in teamwork, coaching and/or mentoring

